Modern farming technologies in rural areas

1247.SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that modern farming practices and inclusive technologies have been implemented in many parts of rural India to foster rural growth;

(b) if so, the areas in the country which have full access to vital and updated information on weather, farming technologies, fertilizers, livestocks, commodity prices and stock markets; and

(c) how many parts of the country will be provided full access to these advancements in near future and when whole country's farmers would be able to utilize modern technologies and what is being done by Government to create capacity building amongst illiterate farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes please.

(b) The farmers from all the States of the country have full access to vital and updated information on weather, farming technology, fertilizers, livestock, commodity prices and stock markets through Kisan Call Centres (KCC) by dialing a Toll Free No.1551 since 21.01.04. Further, the farmers are provided with farming knowledge & skills in agriculture and allied sectors through 581 ATMAs set up under the scheme "Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms" & 562 KVKs supported by Deptt. of Agricultural Research & Education (DARE).

(c) While, the services of KCC are currently available nation wide from 6.00 AM to 10.00 PM on all 7 days of the week, the scheme "Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms" is likely to be extended to all rural districts of the country during 2008-09 which include the left out districts of 5 States namely - Assam (4 districts), Meghalaya (7 districts), Lakshadweep (1 district), Dadar & Nagar Haveli (1 district) & Daman & Diu (1 district).

Awareness in farmers about the functioning of ICAR

1248.SHRI RAJNITI PRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether farmers are aware about the functioning of ICAR;

(b) if not, the reason therefor;

(c) how much is the yearly budget for Agro research of ICAR;

(d) whether farmers have been benefited with Agro research of ICAR;

(e) whether ICAR is utilizing the technology in right manner or not; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Not applicable.

(c) An amount of Rs. 1760.00 crore has been allotted under Plan this year (2008-09) for Agro research for ICAR.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) For effective utilization of technologies, the ICAR has created a network of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in 562 rural districts of the country. The activities of KVKs include on-farm trials to identify the location specificity of technologies under various farming systems, frontline demonstrations to establish the production potential of improved agricultural technologies on the farmers' fields, training of farmers to update their knowledge and skills and training of extension personnel to orient them in the frontier areas of technology development. A large number of extension activities including advisory services, diagnostics visits, field days, group discussions, kisan melas, kisan gosthies, film shows and exhibitions are organized by the KVKs to create awareness of improved technologies among the farmers.

During 2007-08, the KVKs also produced 1.11 lakh q of seeds, 91.29 lakh saplings/seedlings, 40.80 lakh fingerlings and other livestock/poultry strains, besides 8.94 lakh kg bio-products for its availability to the farmers.

Decline in the production of rice

1249. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the production of rice in the country in the previous three years has fallen below the set targets;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government has taken remedial measures to arrest this downward trend;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, the plan of Government to boost production to meet the growing demand; and

(f) the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) No, Sir. The production of rice in the country during the previous three years (2005-06 to 2007-08) is higher than the corresponding target and shows continuous increase over these years as shown in the table below:

(Million Tonnes)

Year	Production	Target
2005-06	91.79	87.80
2006-07	93.35	92.80
2007-08	96.43	93.00

* Fourth Advance Estimate released on 09.07.2008

(b) to (f) Do not arise.